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**Montana Pupil Transportation
News and Updates
January/February 2003**



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A Monthly Newsletter Published by Pupil Transportation, School Budgeting and Accounting Division

For Your Information

Who are you?

There are 56 Counties in the State of Montana. There are more than 20 School District #1s throughout the state. Please use your district name when calling or writing. Please don't forget to leave us your phone number. It takes a while to look through the school directory for Jane Doe who works at school district #1. Once in a while we can recognize your voice but most of the time we can't. This problem exists throughout OPI and your help is appreciated.

TR-1's

When preparing TR-1's (Bus Routes) there can only be one *1st Wheel Chair* on a bus route. When there is an elementary student and a high school student on the same bus, only one of them can be the first one. It doesn't matter which one is first, but there can be only one.

Make sure that the school bus listed on the TR-1 is the actual bus being used. Pre-printed forms show the bus that was in OPI's data file for the route in the prior year. Update by drawing a line through the VIN and plate number of the old bus and writing in the VIN and plate number of the new bus. Be sure to change the capacity if appropriate. When submitting the completed TR-1, include the bus inspection form with all the new information.

Legislative NEWS

HB 103

The transportation community is watching HB #103. The bill eliminates the November High School Ridership count and simplifies the formula by assigning a rate to a particular size of bus according to the following schedule: 95 cents for a school bus with a rated capacity of not more than 49 passenger seating positions, \$1.15 for a school bus with a rated capacity of 50 to 59 passenger seating positions, \$1.36 for a school bus with a rated capacity of 60 to 69 passenger seating positions, \$1.57 for a school bus with a rated capacity of 70 to 79 passenger seating positions, and \$1.80 for a

school bus with a rated capacity of 80 or more passenger seating positions. Contractors, drivers and school district personnel traveled to Helena on Friday, January 17 to testify in favor of this bill. HB 103 went to the appropriations subcommittee Wednesday, February 12, 2003. OPI has been asked to provide additional information regarding the additional funding. It appears that simplification of the formula and removing the November high school count is popular, but finding the additional funding is difficult.

HB 112

The Department of Transportation (DOT) submitted HB 112 for consideration on January 17th. This bill would allow school districts and DOT to work together to design appropriate bus pullouts whenever new highway construction occurs. The newly constructed school designated bus pullouts are beginning to appear around the state. Currently, the law allows districts to adopt a policy to prohibit the operation of amber or red lights when a bus is stopped at the school site to receive or discharge school children when the receipt or discharge does not involve street crossing by the children. The lights may not be operated in violation of that policy. The new language would allow a district to designate appropriately designed pullouts to have the same policy apply.

Since You Asked and Worth Repeating

If a First Aid card expires in 08/03, what day will OPI consider it to be expired?

For consistency, OPI will consider the First Aid card to expire on the last day of August 2003. We have no way of knowing the day if the instructor doesn't supply us with that information.

When will OPI make the 1st semester transportation reimbursement payment?

The first semester transportation reimbursement will be sent to the county treasurer on March 23. Transportation is included when the State Aid payment is paid. Please make sure that all of the drivers have current certification and all buses were inspected. Check the TR-1 (Bus route and reimbursement form) to ensure that the right bus is on the right route. The TR-1 was preprinted this year to help

districts have more consistent reporting, however it is still up to the district to make sure that everything is accurate. If you have questions regarding this information, please call me at (406) 444-3096.



Bus Driver Training Information

The new *Standards for School Buses in Montana 2002* became effective on August 16, 2002. The standards require school districts to design and implement a driver-training program that provides cost-effective, quality training that promotes student safety and reduces school bus accidents.

Each school district must have a commitment to provide school bus drivers who are safe, competent and well trained. This requirement applies to school district employees as well as drivers who work for contractors. The school district is responsible to design a program, implement the program, and provide the training. The district is responsible to maintain a driver-training file that is available for review when monitors or auditors visit the school.

A district training program for school bus drivers providing at least 10 hours of inservice training annually shall include but is not limited to:

1. Pre-and post-trip inspections;
2. Passenger boarding and debording procedures;
3. Driving skills;
4. Defensive driving;
5. Railroad safety;
6. Passenger management;
7. Safety and emergency procedures; and
8. Special needs sensitivity and awareness.

A very important aspect of the training is to provide the drivers an opportunity to participate in workshops, conferences and meetings where drivers can work with and learn from a group of their peers.

There are several ways for drivers to receive the training. Montana Association for Pupil Transportation (MAPT) conducts their annual conference, which provides many hours of training. All sessions qualify. The 2003 conference

will be held at the Copper King in Butte from *June 18 through June 20, 2003*. Information for this conference will be mailed to districts and contractors in March.

March 3rd, 2003 at the Billings Convention Center on King Street Exit. Training will be from 9:00 until 4:00. Contact Mark Simonson from Absarokee Public Schools at (406) 328-4583. See a more detailed agenda attached.

March 15th, 2003 at the Drummond Library or the High School Gymnasium. Training will be from 8:00 until 5:00. Contact Bob Sackman at (406)288-3147. See a more detailed agenda attached.

OPI has a video training library. We are working hard to have tapes available as needed for training by the district or contractor. The purpose of these tapes is to provide a training opportunity when other trainings are not available. Each tape lasts between 13 and 25 minutes. Additional time can be spent talking about what issues drivers have relating to the training tape and how other drivers have dealt with the situation. To order or reserve training tapes, please call Mike Waterman at 406-444-4524. You can reach Mike by email at mwaterman@state.mt.us.

Thanks to everyone for PROMPTLY RETURNING THE TRAINING VIDEOS

IMPORTANT DATES

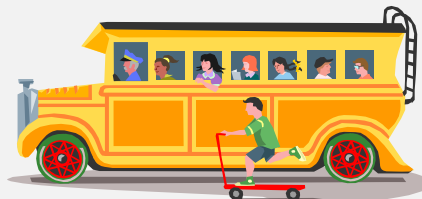
March 3, 2003 Driver Training Opportunity, Billings Hotel and Convention Center (see info above)

March 15, 2003 Driver Training Opportunity, Drummond Library or High School Gymnasium (see info above)

March 2003 Transportation Aid Reimbursement made to Counties for distribution to schools

March/April 2003 TR-4's, Pre-printed Individual Contracts are sent to districts for ensuing year

April 2003 New bus driver listing sent to districts



Update driver certificates, bus inspection forms, route information and Individual Transportation Contracts information regularly.

Transportation Safety Training

Absarokee Public Schools
Billings Truck Center

Billings Hotel and Convention Center
King Street Exit
Monday, March 3, 2003

Tentative Agenda

9:00 to 10:00 Joe Pierce, Operation Lifesaver

Joe has a lively presentation on railroad crossing safety. Every railroader has a story and Joe's story will be amazing. Joe is a deputy at the Yellowstone Sheriffs Office and has been a presenter for Operation Lifesaver for 5 years. The choice is to "Stop, Look and Listen" and to live.

10:00 to 11:00 Prudy Holman

Summer and Winter Driving is a course designed to help drivers with safe driving no matter what the weather. This is a timely and much needed refresher.

11:00 to 12:00 Doug Kellie, Belgrade Public Schools – Belgrade

Doug will provide a insightful session on Defensive Driving. Doug's position as Transportation Director and school bus driver at Belgrade Public Schools has given him years of experience in Defensive Driving techniques. Doug is a strong advocate for the school bus driver and participants of this session will know how important they are to the children, the district, and the transportation industry when this session concludes.

12:00 to 1:00 Lunch sponsored by Billings Truck Center

1:00 to 2:00 Maxine Mougeot, State Director of Pupil Transportation – OPI

Maxine will go over the new state standards. She will present how the law changed, why and what the impact of the new standards is for drivers. She will include information on current legislation. There will be plenty of time for questions and answers.

2:00 to 3:00 Montana Highway Patrol

The drivers will control this session. This is an opportunity to talk with uniformed officer about issues that drivers may need help with. Information will be available regarding issues with the motoring public "running the reds", passing unsafely, etc., and how to get help.

For further information or to sign up for the class, please call

Mark Simonson at (406) 328-4583

**To register, fax a list of attending drivers plus the name and phone number of a contact person and
fax to Mark at (406) 328-4077**

Transportation Safety Training

Drummond Public Schools & the Office of Public Instruction

Saturday, March 15, 2003

Bring a sack lunch – Coffee and treats will be provided

Public Library across the street from the school or the High School Gymnasium

8:00 to 9:00 Maxine Mougeot, State Director of Pupil Transportation – OPI

Maxine will go over the new state standards. She will present how the law changed and why. What the impact of the new standards is for drivers. She will include information on current legislation.

9:00 to 10:00 Rick Flink, Operation Lifesaver

Rick has a lively presentation on railroad crossing safety. Rick's story is amazing and any driver will think twice whenever they come to a railroad crossing.

10:00 to 11:00 Montana Highway Patrol

The drivers will control this session. This is an opportunity to talk with the Patrol about issues that drivers may need help with. Information will be available regarding issues with the motoring public "running the reds", passing unsafely, etc., and how to get help.

11:00 to 12:00 Virginia Deland, PLUK – Missoula

Virginia will provide insight to special needs students, how they act with certain disabilities, how they respond when challenged, how to get help when there are difficult issues and how to keep these kids on the bus instead of kicking them off.

1:00 to 2:00 Kathy Bramer, OPI (**not Confirmed yet**)

Kathy is the Personnel Director at OPI. Kathy will offer training in sexual and other kinds of harassment. She will make it clear what is ok and what is not. Kathy will help us to know how to ask for help and where to go to get help.

2:00 to 3:00 Doug Kellie, Belgrade Public Schools – Belgrade

Doug will provide a perceptive session on Student Management. Doug's position as Transportation Director at Belgrade Public Schools has given him a great perspective in how to deal with kids. Doug is an advocate for the school bus driver and drivers will know how important they are when this session concludes.

3:00 to 5:00 Luke Avery, Safety Specialist at Karst Stage – Bozeman

Luke will present the classroom portion of the Advanced Drivers Education training from Lewistown. Luke is tuned in to the need of the transportation community to keep all of our transportees' safe as we move them from home to school and back. Luke will offer training in collision avoidance, evasive steering, off road recovery, cornering, controlled braking and much, much more.

Several times throughout the day, **Jack Welsh from Billings Truck Center** will conduct air brakes training in a bus outside in the parking lot. Once the drivers go through this class, they should be able to pass the air brakes endorsement for the Commercial Drivers License.

For further information or to sign up for the class, please call

Bob Sackman at (406) 288-3147

To register, fax a list of attending drivers plus a contact person and phone number to:

Bob at (406-793-5699)